News from the Wyoming Department of Health

Tuesday, July 25, 2006

Outbreak Identified Among Bible Camp Attendees

The Wyoming Department of Health Infectious Disease Epidemiology Program (IDEP) has identified a significant outbreak of gastroenteritis among people who attended Camp Grace bible camp this summer.

Since June 15 more than 200 people participated in programs at the camp, which is located near Wheatland in northeast Albany County. Illness has been reported in attendees of several different weekly sessions from mid-June until mid-July.

"We are currently conducting a thorough epidemiologic investigation," said Kelly Weidenbach, surveillance epidemiologist for the Wyoming Department of Health. "This involves interviewing all the campers, who are predominantly from Wyoming, to see if they have experienced symptoms and to determine risk factors associated with illness."

Of the nearly 50 people interviewed as of July 24, 2006, IDEP has identified approximately 31 individuals who developed gastroenteritis while attending or after attending the camp.

Camp directors voluntarily shut down the camp on July 19. The camp will remain closed at least until the investigation has been completed. The Department of Health, the Department of Agriculture and the Department of Environmental Quality are involved.

"While we have not completed our investigation or ruled out other sources or locations as the cause of illness, the initial focus has been on the camp's water system," Weidenbach said.

The Wyoming Public Health Laboratory is testing samples from camp attendees to determine what has caused the outbreak. Based on interviews conducted so far, investigators are not ruling out the possibility that multiple agents are to blame.

Prevalent symptoms include watery diarrhea, abdominal cramping, nausea and vomiting. Symptom duration ranges from 24 hours to 14 days. The majority of ill cases are children; however, adults associated with the camp have also been affected.

People who attended the camp between mid June and mid July and who are experiencing gastrointestinal symptoms should call the Wyoming Department of Health Epidemiology Hotline at 877-996-9000.

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